

Springfield National Cemetery  
1702 East Seminole Street  
Springfield, Missouri 65804

## Description

The Springfield National Cemetery, established in 1867, is located in Greene County. The main entrance is situated along East Seminole Street and is protected by an iron gate supported by iron posts with a pedestrian gate on each side. The cemetery has been expanded over the years and, in 1911, the adjacent 6.3-acre Confederate cemetery along its southern boundary was incorporated into the national cemetery (Sections 1N, 2N, 1S and 2S). Later expansions included 4.3 acres of land to the west of the original cemetery (Sections F, G, H, I, J, K, and L). The older portion of the cemetery is enclosed by a limestone wall constructed in 1874. The wall bordering the north and east boundaries in the newer burial area is made of concrete. Chain link fencing encloses the remainder of the newer burial area, as well as the southern side of Section 34. Openings in the wall are located at each end of the roadway between the original cemetery and the former Confederate cemetery. Both openings are enclosed by iron gates. There are also two openings between the former Confederate cemetery and Section 34, one of which is enclosed by an iron gate.



Approximately 280 feet to the south of the main entrance is a circle upon which stands the flagpole, and equally spaced around the circle are four artillery monuments. The lodge and service building are situated immediately to the west of the main entrance, and a rostrum sits approximately 250 feet to the south of the flagpole. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.

The lodge, constructed in 1940, is a brick two-story structure, containing six rooms, one and one-half baths, an office, and a basement. The roof is slate. The building was renovated in 1996 for use as an administrative office.



A brick and concrete service building with an asphalt shingle roof is located to the west of the lodge. The date of construction is unknown, but it was built before 1933, when records show that the building was enlarged to provide for a tool house, a double garage, and rest rooms. In 1939, the building was remodeled and the garage extended by 20 feet. In 1998, the building was renovated to include new overhead doors, replacement windows, the addition of a covered storage area, and installation of concrete paving where needed near the building.

A stone rostrum with iron railings is located in the Confederate section of the cemetery. The date of construction is unknown. The rostrum is built on the line between the Confederate

section and the main portion of the cemetery and is built with the north side facing the main portion of the cemetery and the south side facing the Confederate section and one speaker's lectern on each side for patriotic and commemorative observances held at the cemetery.



### Noted Burials

There are five Medal of Honor recipients buried in the national cemetery. Their graves are marked with headstones inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the awarding service and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR." The names and grave locations are as follows:

Harrison Collins - Corporal, U. S. Army , Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee Cavalry – Section 26, Grave 1357-B.

Orion P. Howe - Musician, Company C, 55<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry - Section 4, Grave 207-A.

Fred Henry McGuire - Hospital Apprentice, U. S. Navy - Section 29, Grave 332.

Patrick H. Pentzer - Captain, Company C, 97<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry - Section 24, Grave 1696.

Jack Williams - Pharmacist's Mate Third Class - U. S. Naval Reserve - Section 30, Grave 2375.

### Significant Monuments/Memorials

Union Memorial (Bailey Monument) - This monument is 25 feet in height, surmounted by a statue of a life-size infantry soldier (six feet). This monument was erected in accordance with the bequest of the late Dr. T. J. Bailey of Springfield, at a cost of \$5,000.

Lyon Monument - Approximately 12-14 feet tall with a knight's helmet, a battle axe and a wreath on top of a four-foot pillar. The date of erection is unknown. By General Orders No 111 dated December 30, 1861, General Lyon was given an award posthumously. It read as follows: "Thanks of United States Congress to General Lyon's command: Joint Resolution expressive of the recognition by Congress of the gallant and patriotic services of the late Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, and the officers and soldiers under his command, at the battle of Springfield, Missouri." (General Lyon was in the United States Army of the West, Operations, August 5-9, 1861.)



Price Monument – This monument, approximately 15 feet tall, is topped by a larger-than-life-size bronze figure of a Confederate soldier approximately ten feet tall. It was erected in 1901 to honor General Sterling Price. Chevalier Trentanove of Italy was the sculptor. On the front of the monument below the soldier is a bronze portrait, alleg-

edly of General Price, Missouri's soldier in the Army of the Confederate States of America. On each side of the monument are bronze replicas of the Confederate battle flag.

Pearl Harbor Survivors Association Monument – This granite monument located to the east of the Confederate section was dedicated on August 8, 1992. At the bottom of the memorial are inscribed seals of the four branches of military service (U. S. Navy, U. S. Marines, U. S. Army, and U. S. Coast Guard).

There is a small granite block placed at a point where it was thought that 750 to 800 unknown Confederate were interred. The block is inscribed as follows:



IN MEMORY OF THE GALLANT CONFEDERATE  
DEAD WHO FELL AT WILSON'S CREEK ON  
AUGUST 10, 1861, AND WHOSE PLACE OF  
BURIAL IS NOT KNOWN THIS MARKER WAS  
ERECTED BY THE UNITED DAUGHTERS OF  
THE CONFEDERACY ON SEPT. 27, 1958.



In 1957, an excavation to a depth of seven feet had been made in an attempt to locate evidence of human remains in that spot, but none was found. Because of the earlier belief, however, that site was chosen for the monument. This concrete slab, located in the Confederate section along the south side of Third Drive South and directly south of the Price monument, consists of one slab 6 feet by 16 feet in the Confederate section (marked off in four sections.) An annual general inspection report dated January 8, 1953, recommended that an appropriate inscription be entered on the slab to indicate the common grave site (a fact that cannot be confirmed). Then Superintendent Harold Montague contacted the members of the Board of Directors of the Confederate Cemetery Association of Missouri who donated the Confederate cemetery to the U. S. Government. No member could furnish any information to identify the purpose for which the slab was erected. Action initiated in 1953 to determine burials, if any, was dropped due to violation of sentiments of the patriotic organizations concerned, and the project was abandoned.

During the Bicentennial Celebration on July 4, 1976, the Lakes Counties 4H Clubs of America buried a time capsule which is marked by a small granite slab just north of the rostrum.

There are four monuments, equally spaced around the flagpole circle, each made of an original cast iron seacoast artillery tube and secured by a concrete base. A bronze plaque affixed to one of the monuments is inscribed as follows:

UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY  
SPRINGFIELD  
ESTABLISHED 1867  
INTERMENTS 1521  
KNOWN 832  
UNKNOWN 889

On the south side of General Sterling Price's monument is a plaque which reads as follows:

AUGUST 10, 1984  
THIS TABLET IS DEDICATED BY THE  
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION IN GRATEFUL  
APPRECIATION TO THE UNITED  
DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY  
MISSOURI DIVISION, FOR ACTIONS TAKEN  
TO REMOVE DEED RESTRICTIONS ON 485  
UNOCCUPIED CONFEDERATE SITES  
IN SPRINGFIELD NATIONAL CEMETERY  
GRAVESITES FOR USE BY ALL VETERANS  
AND THEIR DEPENDENTS SERVES AS A  
SYMBOL OF REUNIFICATION OF PURPOSE  
FOR MEMORIALIZING THOSE WHO HAVE  
HONORABLY SERVED THIS GREAT NATION  
WITHOUT REGARD TO PAST DIFFERENCES  
IN CONFEDERATE AND UNION ALIKE  
DEDICATED ON THIS ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK  
AUG. 10, 1861



The Confederate cemetery had been established in 1871 by the Confederate Cemetery Association for the interment of Confederate soldiers and contained 6.3 acres, of which 2.7 acres were enclosed by a wall. This cemetery adjoined the national cemetery. By an Act of Congress approved March 3, 1911, the Secretary of War was authorized to accept the Confederate Cemetery as part of the Springfield National Cemetery. The Act also provided that a suitable gate or entry way be made in the stone wall that divided the two cemeteries, so that persons may readily pass from one to the other. The deed contained a restriction that the cemetery would never be used for any other purpose than as a cemetery for the graves of men who were in the military or naval service of the Confederate States of America.

When the Army wished to expand the Springfield National Cemetery because gravesites would soon become exhausted, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) organization was contacted relative to the use of the vacant land lying outside of the wall of the Confederate section, adjoining the national cemetery (3.6 acres). Correspondence between the Department of the Army and the Missouri Division of the UDC resulted in an agreement by the UDC that they had no objection to the unrestricted use of the land outside the enclosure wall surrounding the

Confederate cemetery. Subsequently, the organization was requested to execute a "Special Release" deed to the 3.6 acres, whereby all restrictions would be removed. A Judge Advocate General's opinion was rendered on December 26, 1947, to the effect that the UDC was not empowered to execute the necessary release. Since the land in question was accepted pursuant to specific authorization of Congress, it would be necessary to obtain Congressional action to authorize the Secretary of the Army, upon release of the restrictions, to administer the involved portion as a national cemetery. By deed dated September 13, 1948, the Confederate Cemetery Association removed all the restrictions written into the deed of June 28, 1911, relative to the land outside the enclosure wall and expressly retained the restrictions on the 2.7 acres containing the Confederate burials. Public Law 85-41, approved May 31, 1957, amended the Act of March 3, 1911, so as to permit the use of the portion of the Confederate cemetery lying outside the walled enclosure as part of the national cemetery.

There still remained many unoccupied gravesites in the area restricted for Confederate burials, none of which will ever be used because of the passage of time. In 1981, an agreement was made between the Confederate Cemetery Association of Missouri and the then Veterans Administration that all restrictions would be removed and that burials of all veterans could also be made in the area within the enclosure wall. In 1984, the old Confederate cemetery was reopened for burial of veterans from any war.

### Civil War Activity in Area

On August 10, 1861, the second major battle of the Civil War was fought, the first in the western theater, in the rolling hills and brush-choked gullies around Wilson's Creek, some ten miles south of Springfield. Headstrong but capable, Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, one of the most promising young Union officers, began the attack by dividing his inferior force, sending Franz Sigel to make a rear attack on the opposing force. Sigel, 37, a native German and a graduate of Karlsruhe Military Academy, had been commissioned a Brigadier General only three days before the battle and was not familiar with American military practices. Independent command was not one of his strong points. Sigel's attack came to nothing. His troops were routed and he was out of the battle without having contributed much except confusion. Lyon drove the Confederates, under Generals Sterling Price and Ben McCulloch back at first, but they rallied and with their superior numbers eventually won the day. The Federal retreat was greatly hampered by the great mounds of the dead, making escape difficult. Many more lost their lives or were wounded. It was during one of the charges when Lyon was rallying his men that he was killed by a bullet. With Lyon dead, the Federals withdrew and the Confederates were too worn out to follow. The Federals left along Bloody Ridge 1,317 of their force dead, nearly 25 percent of their original force and withdrew all the way to Rolla, southwest of St. Louis, conceding a large part of the state to the secessionist forces. A Confederate victory was claimed, and morale soared in the South. No other battle in the state would have as heavy losses during the war.

On January 8, 1863, a battle was fought at Springfield, Missouri. In late December of 1862, Confederate Colonel Joseph O. Shelby's brigade was on the march on the border's side. By January 8, in the distance Springfield was before them like a beautiful panorama. With flaunting banners and all the pomp and circumstance of war, the Federals had marched out to meet them and had taken their position. The 1st and 3rd Regiments were formed as infantry and Major B. Elliott's scouts and First Lieutenant Gregg's company were held in reserve. Shelby rapidly moved his brigade to the open plain south and southeast of the town. Elliott and Gregg

were on the right flank, watching and skirmishing with the enemy there. Colonel MacDonald's regiment plainly could be seen winding over the crest of the hill and moving rapidly to the attack. MacDonald had met the enemy and was driving them, but the enemy soon re-enforced and would in turn compel him to retreat. Shelby saw the crisis and ordered Lieutenant Colonel Gordon and Colonel Gilkey to charge with their regiments to support MacDonald. At the command, 1,000 warriors sprang to their feet and, with one wild Missouri yell, burst upon the foe. The storm increased and the combatants got closer and closer. The battle thickened. Colonel G. W. Thompson was now ordered up and advanced. The battery commanded by Lieutenant Richard A. Collins was also advanced. The re-enforced Federals came back with cavalry and artillery, and a hot, desperate conflict ensued. The fighting lasted 13 hours. The amassed forces were large. Federal forces numbered 2,099, and Confederate estimates were about 3,000 to 4,000. The battle at Springfield was soundly claimed as a victory by both armies. The Federals remained in control of the field but not without serious losses. The Confederate command, after forced marches of over 200 miles, was tired and cold. Both sides mourned many casualties.